

EVALUATION REPORT
Of
JOB-SEEKERS: YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE MOVE
PROGRESS funded project
VS/2011/0051





Introduction

This report provides findings from the evaluation of 'Jobseekers: Young People on the Move' project funded by the EC's Progress programme. The evaluation was commissioned by the Province of Milan as the leading institution and conducted by the CEC (Comité Européen de Coordination) a European network of NPOs mainly working on social and professional inclusion of marginalised people, the promotion of best practice and the development of European integration.

The Jobseekers project aimed to improve employment opportunities for young people. In particular, it geared towards equipping young people with better and more relevant skills as well as sharing best practice examples for anticipating and matching labour market needs.

The project's specific objectives were as follows:

1. improving the quality and effectiveness of information, guidance and support services for young people seeking their first jobs and/or during instability phases, change and professional mobility;
2. implementing information services by introducing practical tools and specific online services and offline presence based on other European experiences, such as "Cité des Métiers";
3. teaching and supporting young job seekers and giving them successful methodologies for researching and preparing a curriculum vitae and/or require specialized consultation services
- 4) rationalizing and optimizing the necessary activities to update the employment services through the sharing of tools and methods based on the best practices of the Partners;
- 5) helping young people in developing specific transversal competencies for employment versatility (knowledge professions, entrepreneurial skills, business relation management);
- 6) improving the knowledge of the key people in employment information and guidance services (experts, advisors).

The overall aim of the evaluation was to provide an opportunity for in-depth reflection on the project.

More specifically the evaluation had the following objectives:

1. Assess the efficiency of the activities in meeting the project's objectives
2. Assess the management effectiveness
3. Establish whether changes were needed to the project and suggest possible improvements.

Therefore, it consisted of three components: (1) an assessment of project planning and scheduling, (2) a management assessment, and (3) as assessment of the project dissemination. These were primarily the task of the coordinator and were managed through regular meetings, a website and very frequent email communication.

This report details the work undertaken for the evaluation and presents the main conclusions. We will assess the key developments for each area through a set of quality indicators.

The analysis is based on two elements: desk-based analyses of project information and data as well as feedback from project leader and participants.

Table 1 presents the variety of evaluation made in the project. The data is qualitative and quantitative. The evaluation was conducted during the project time frame.

The evaluation made in the Jobseekers project. Detailed table

Table 1

The topic of evaluation	Level of evaluation	The target of evaluation	The method	The time frame for the evaluation
Project meeting	External	Project implementation	Questionnaires: fixed and open ended questions	After each meeting
The management of the project	External	Project work Project management	Questionnaires: fixed and open ended questions Interviews with the project leader and project members	Month 6 Month 12
The impact of the project	External	Dissemination of results (tools, target audience...) Transferability	Questionnaires: fixed and open ended questions Interviews with the project leader	Month 6 Month 12

The key evaluation criteria and questions regarding project aspects.

In order to evaluate the project planning and scheduling as well as management effectiveness, we will refer to the following elements:

Table 2

Element	Description	Quality indicators
Project planning and implementation	The extent to which the project's planning is respected. Deviations from the work programme and actions undertaken.	- Work plan is clear and deadlines are realistic and respected - Planned activities are implemented
Transnational meetings	Evaluation of progress made during the meetings	- Quality of Information and communication - Partner participation and contribution - Respecting the agenda & meeting the goals of the meeting - Partners understand the next steps - Logistic aspects



Effectiveness of management arrangements	The extent to which management capacities and arrangements put in place supports the achievement of results: effective coordination and efficient communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear division of tasks between the partners -Distribution of responsibilities among the partners -Methods of communication between partners are agreed and regular
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1. Planning and Management

The evaluation of the project management started in the first meeting. Since that this part of evaluation has been regularly made (table 1).

The deliverables were the Work Plan, Progress Reports and the final report. As stated in the original proposal, the Coordinator (Province of Milan) would undertake a substantial part of the project research as well as the overall management of the network. According to our evaluation, the Coordinating team was able to play a key role in meeting deadlines, drafting timely reports, providing a hub for prompt and frequent network communication and ensuring maximum benefit from the networking activities and meetings.

Specifically, the Co-ordinator role encompassed the following:

- maintaining a management overview
- maintaining communication with the EC
- documenting, developing and circulating outputs of the meetings
- supporting networking and dissemination
- coordinating the activities of the work packages ensuring each work package is executed according to the planned schedule
- contributing to deliverables in a timely manner and helping to disseminate outputs as appropriate

The management of the network proceeded well and project members have been satisfied with the work on the coordinator.

It should be recognised that multi-national collaborations are difficult – because of the obvious demands of travel and distance, along with differences in language and resources, and also because of subtle differences of research culture and working norms. However, Jobseekers network successfully meet these difficulties through frequent and open dialogue across its members.

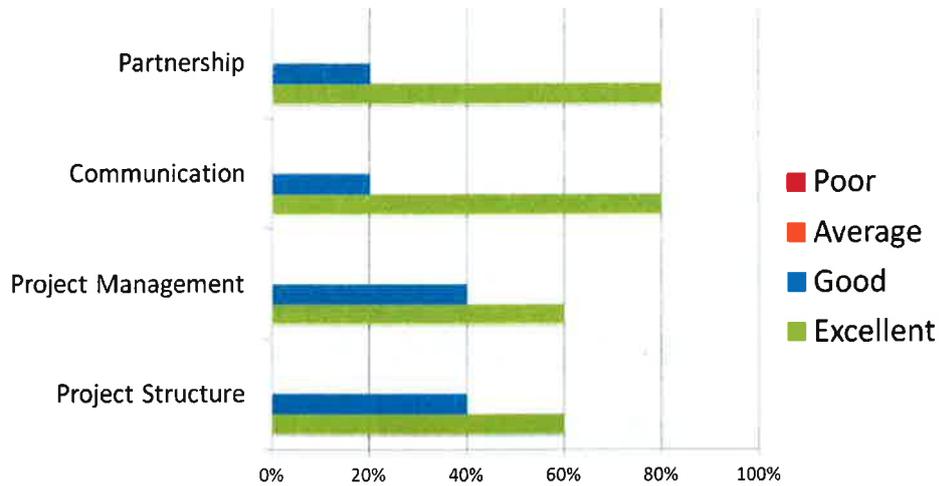
Working arrangements encompassed some key elements:

- a detailed work plan/ timetable with clearly specified tasks and outcomes for work packages
- project meetings
- the main administrative and management burden sustained by the coordinator
- encouragement for national and international dissemination (policy, media)

Regarding deviations from the project work programme, an additional activity has been included: the collection of social-economic data. We consider that the partners have successful coping with additional activity and changes to the original plan.

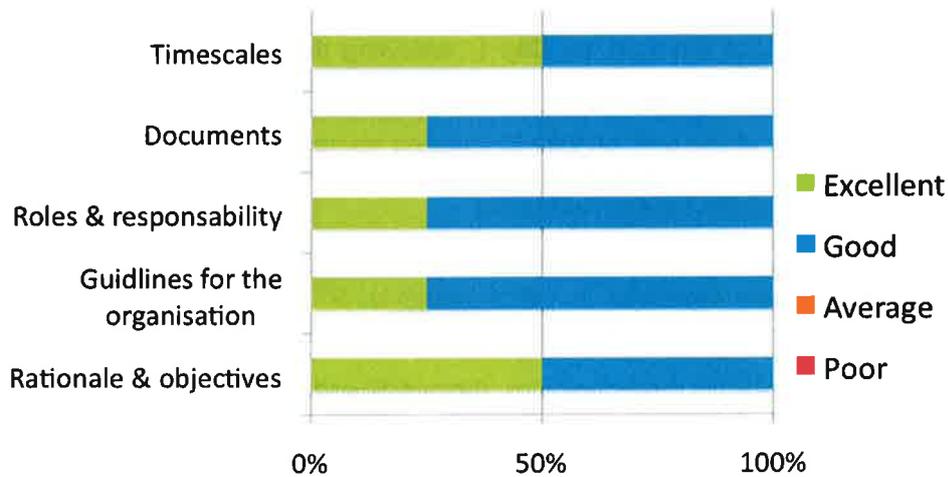
To conclude, the project planning and implementation evaluation, as outlined by the below bar charts, is positive.

Overall evaluation: Excellent outcomes



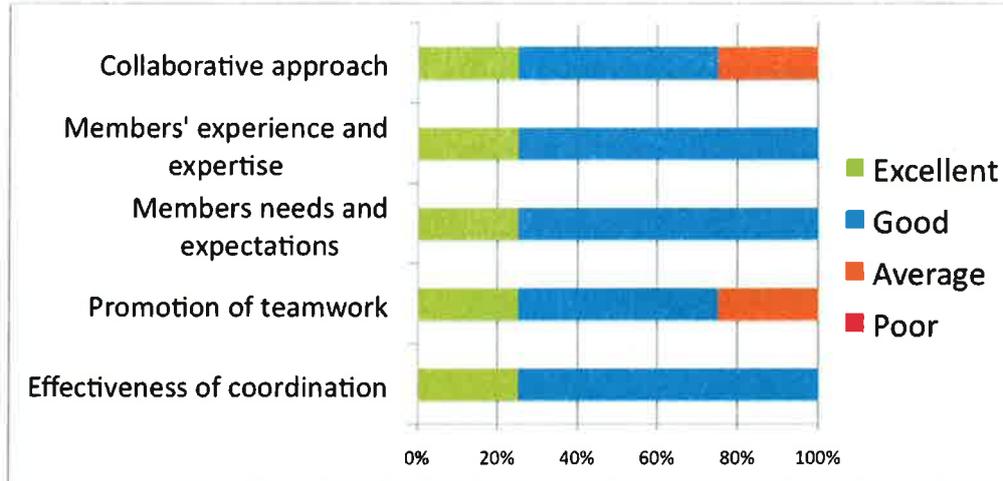
Regarding communication, we need to underline some initial difficulties. While horizontal communication within the network was encouraged, there were significant constraints on people's time to contribute to the network. Hence, the chief responsibility for facilitating communication fell upon the co-ordinator. Besides these initial issues, the coordinator managed to meet a successful communication.

Planning and Management: Good outcomes



2. Effectiveness of management arrangements

Coordination: Good outcomes



3. Transnational Meetings

Each workshop took the following form, with some variation depending on work flow:

- One person attended, from each project member organisation, to contribute to Work Packages as specified in the work plan
- There were Plenary meeting at the start, on Day 1, reviewing the work plan, management issues and the progress of each WP
- There were plenary meetings if appropriate (e.g. for invited speakers)
- There were plenary meeting at the end, on Day 2, focusing on networking and dissemination and forward planning for each of the ongoing Work Packages
- Minutes were taken and circulated for each workshop

Five meetings have been successful organised: kick off, Paris and Bucharest, Spiska Nova, Milan. Moreover, an additional meeting was organised in Lecco (Italy) on 5th July 2012 to analyse the opportunity to start up a Cité des Métiers and the necessary steps.

According to the feedbacks we received on these meetings, the overall evaluation is very positive. 55% of the respondents were completely satisfied with meetings contents, partners' contributions and quality of interventions.

In parallel, 80% of the respondents were satisfied with the meetings outcomes: work methodologies, common tools etc. In particular, a vast majority (70%) of the respondents found that these meetings allowed them to discover new work methodologies.

Also, 93% of the respondents felt that the meeting answered their initial expectations. Finally, 79% assessed the logistical aspects as excellent.

At the end of the project, a final event was organised to report the results of the project. Policy makers, relevant stakeholders gathered at the Province of Milan for a one day conference on 15th July 2012

celebrating the conclusion of the Jobseekers project. This event ensured the visibility of the project and supported the disseminations of its results.

In addition to the on-going and incremental dissemination processes throughout the project, such an event was strategic, creating a high profile occasion both for engaging with the stakeholder networks we had developed and for getting coverage to address wider audiences.

Transnational meetings: Contents



80%
The meeting allowed to enrich the knowledge in the matter



70%
The meeting allowed to discover new work methodologies



55%
The meeting allowed to produce common tools



93%
Meeting answered to their initial expectations

Transnational meetings: Satisfaction



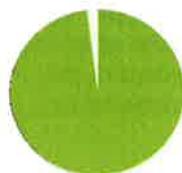
55%
Completely satisfied with meeting contents & quality of intervention



80%
Satisfied with meeting outcomes



79%
Logistical aspects as excellent



98%
Satisfied with the working environment

4. Dissemination and Mainstreaming

The European Commission defines dissemination as "a planned process of providing information on the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the results of programmes and initiatives to key actors. It occurs as and when the results of programmes and initiatives become available."



We consider dissemination, promotion and exploitation of results key elements in a multilateral project. Moreover, according to the Jobseeker's application form, project dissemination and transferability is one of the steps to achieve projects' objectives.

In particular, dissemination plays an important role from the beginning of the project's life span to its end. From the funding programme's point of view it is not enough to focus on the dissemination activities mainly in the final stages of the project. Instead, a strategy covering the whole project cycle is necessary.

All Jobseekers project partners were responsible for the dissemination, mainstreaming and exploitations of products and results on a national and European level.

Jobseekers has been publicised and promoted in a number of ways including websites, flyers and reports. In particular, the following three key actions have been developed:

1. Keeping project website page up-to-date

The Jobseekers project has a website giving information on project partners and updates on project activities. Moreover, Jobseekers box – one of the key project outcomes – will also be on the website and stakeholders could consult and download it. The project website will remain in use after the project is completed.

Objective:

- Up-to-date information regarding developments within the project and the transfer of knowledge and information.

2. Publications (brochures, flyers, reports) on project progress and results:

Publications have been made in every country of the partnership.

Objectives:

- National and European distribution of project progress, results and products
- Information to participants, project partners and other beneficiaries and interested parties (stakeholders)

3. Actions towards policy makers and the target sectors:

Relevant stakeholders (i.e. local authorities, chambers of commerce, national confederation of the Italian traders "Confcommercio", social partners and education representatives) have been informed during the course of the project. In particular, the additional meeting in Lecco and the final meeting in Milan represent two successful examples of actions towards policy makers and the target sectors. The involvement of relevant local stakeholders during the course of the project was crucial not only for the dissemination process but also for mainstreaming.

Objective:

- Transferring knowledge and experience of project products and results on national and European level

Regarding mainstreaming activities, we would like to underline the efforts developed by Provoctie, the Romanian Jobseekers project partner, to develop a Cité des Métiers in Romania. Jobseekers allowed the Romanian partner to learn about the methodology and necessary steps to start up a Cité des Métiers. They successful found a private partner (Webhelp Group) and received a letter of intent and this will further discussed next financial year. Moreover, they wrote a partnership proposal and got



the national accreditation from Romania public institution for informing and counselling on labour market.

The project has also allowed Spišská Nová – the Slovak project partner – to acquire key information about the Cité des Métiers' network. In particular, they investigate on the possibility to open a Cité des Métiers in Spišská Nová Ves as key tool for overcoming high unemployment. Negotiations have been taking place with private companies (i.e. - Embraco, Andritz - Jochmann and Alkon) and public entities (- the City Authority in Spišská Nová Ves and Labour Office in Spišská Nová Ves).

To conclude, our overall evaluation on dissemination and mainstreaming is positive. Projects partners have not only promoted and disseminated the project results but also taken actions to transfer them to other contexts. We have particularly appreciated the efforts towards the opening a Cité des Metiers in Romania and Slovakia. These activities confirm the commitment of Jobseekers partners to transferring successful project results and represent an important added-value for the project.

However, we have to underline the lack of consistency between all the actions undertaken by partners during the dissemination process. In our opinion, this was most likely due to lack of a clear and well organised valorisation plan.

Two Recommendations

1. (Re)thinking the dissemination and mainstreaming

In particular we recommend developing a valorisation plan to widely disseminate information and results. A detailed valorisation plan indicates all projects activities will be executed during the whole project period. Main focal point for the dissemination and mainstreaming activities is that project results are and will remain usable, available and accessible after completion of the project. The plan has to be drafted at the very beginning of a project and must contain activities to be carried out continuously until the project's end (and possibly afterwards).

In order to develop a good dissemination plan the coordinator should answer the following questions:

- What is the expected project result? (*anticipation of the results*)
- What are the dissemination activities (*conferences, meetings, articles..*)
- What kind of needs does the project respond to? (*ex – ante needs analysis*)
- Who are the final or potential users or beneficiaries of the project's outcomes? (*sustainability of results*) .

We also recommend following a five-stage model for dissemination

- A clear rationale for and objectives of dissemination and exploitation
- A strategy to identify which results to disseminate and to which audiences – and designing programmes and initiatives accordingly
- Determining organisational approaches of the different stakeholders and allocating responsibilities and resources
- Implementing the strategy by identifying and gathering results and undertaking dissemination and exploitation activities
- Monitoring and evaluating the effects of the activity.

Moreover, it is important to strengthening the project's impact and transferring it to other contexts.

Mainstreaming is the planned process of transferring the successful results of programmes and initiatives to appropriate decision-makers in regulated local, regional, national or European systems.

Regarding the Jobseekers project, we recommend to consider the following levels and target groups:

- Valorisation of project results and products takes place on both national – through networks of respective project partners – as well as European level



- Valorisation of project results and products takes place both within the employment sector- through networks of respective project partners - as well as to other sectors.

In order to make valorisation of project results and products successful on both national as well as European level, valorisation activities – with specified message – should aim at the following target groups:

- Policy-makers
- Education representatives
- Public employment services

2. Invest on networking

By experience the CEC knows that it is quite difficult to mobilise partners after the end of an EU-funded project because of both lack of time and funding.

In order to overcome this issue, it is important to invest on networking and use all the possibilities to meet again (European seminars, partners General Assemblies other European/national or regional projects etc...) and work on a common objective to reach.

As evaluators we recommend to the Jobseekers partners focusing on the following two approaches. Firstly, building at the local and regional level strong partnerships gathering stakeholders in charge of youth orientation, training and employment policies (i.e. education operators, social partners, private and public authorities, NGO's in charge of the social and professional integration as well as training of young people and low qualified people).

Secondly, working on some proposals to address to their national ESF agencies and try to set up a project in the future ESF programme 2014-2020. In particular, we recommend focusing on the thematic "Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility" through access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people and sustainable integration of young people not in employment, education or training into the labour market.